



General Assembly Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

A/47/543
S/24673
16 October 1992
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Forty-seventh session
Agenda item 27

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-seventh year

COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE ORGANIZATION
OF AFRICAN UNITY

Letter dated 14 October 1992 from the Permanent Representatives
of France and Gabon to the United Nations addressed to the
Secretary-General

We have the honour to request the distribution as an official document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 27, and of the Security Council of the communiqué issued following the XVIIth Conference of Heads of State of France and Africa, held at Libreville from 5 to 7 October.

(Signed) Dennis Dangué REWAKA
Ambassador,
Permanent Representative of Gabon
to the United Nations

(Signed) Jean-Bernard MERIMEE
Ambassador,
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to the United Nations

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ANNEX

Communiqué issued at Libreville on 7 October 1992 following the
XVIIth Conference of Heads of State of France and Africa

The XVIIth Conference of Heads of State of France and Africa was held at Libreville from 5 to 7 October 1992 at the invitation of Mr. Omar Bongo, President of the Gabonese Republic. Thirty-six States took part in the Conference.

The presence for the first time of the Republic of Cameroon was unanimously welcomed.

Having learned of the indisposition of Mr. François Mitterrand, President of the French Republic, the Heads of State and delegation requested Mr. Pierre Bérégovoy, Prime Minister of the French Republic, to be kind enough to convey to him their wishes for a prompt recovery.

The Heads of State and delegation exchanged views on the main developments taking place in Africa and in the world. Against this background they considered the political, economic, social and cultural prospects of their countries.

The Heads of State and delegation welcomed the great effort to achieve democratization made by many African countries in recent years. They stressed the need to give priority to negotiation and dialogue so as to afford full freedom for the exercise of universal suffrage.

Peace, security, democracy and development are inseparable. Particular emphasis was placed on the close link between democracy and development.

The need to ensure social justice, to pay particular attention to the most disadvantaged, to health and to the environment and to obtain fairer payment for raw materials was forcefully recalled.

In this respect, the Heads of State and delegation expressed the hope that the negotiations under way on coffee and cocoa would be conducted in a spirit of solidarity, partnership and flexibility so that they would be brought to a rapid conclusion satisfactory to all parties concerned.

The Heads of State and delegation took note of the ongoing efforts of the African States to overcome the serious economic and financial crisis which continues to undermine their economies. They pointed out that an improvement in the situation, in Africa as elsewhere, depends in large measure on enhancing the efficiency of government and public sector management and on a more favourable financial and economic environment.

They recognized the need for more sustained economic growth. In that connection, the Heads of State and delegation reiterated their common desire

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to strengthen cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions (the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank) within the framework of structural adjustment programmes. If such programmes are to be implemented more effectively, they must be designed within a medium-term framework. Resources on concessional terms also must be mobilized more effectively, and the social dimension, as well as adjustment requirements, must be taken into account in the countries concerned, in order to ensure the success of the democratic process now under way.

The Heads of State and delegation noted that, notwithstanding the progress made with the support of the international community, indebtedness compromised expectations for economic recovery, without which lasting development could not be achieved. They called on the industrialized countries to continue their efforts to reduce the debt burden of the African countries.

They expressed the hope that international financial institutions would take the special situation in Africa more fully into account and welcomed the establishment by France of a debt conversion fund for development for the middle-income countries of sub-Saharan Africa. They encouraged France to continue those efforts.

Economic activity in Africa must proceed within a broader framework and in a more modern legal context. Regional and subregional cooperation and integration within Africa form an essential link which can energize the entrepreneurial spirit and individual capabilities. Instruments for cooperation and institutions to foster integration are major assets already in place on the continent.

The Heads of State and delegation underscored the importance of the role of women in the development process of their countries. They took note with interest of the Bamako Declaration and invited all African Heads of State to extend concrete support to all activities undertaken in the context of the Fourth World Conference on Women: Equality, Development and Peace, to be held at Beijing in 1995, in particular, at the African regional conference to be held at Dakar in 1994.

They recalled that the franc zone provided an element of economic and monetary stability conducive to exemplary cooperation. They reaffirmed their desire to maintain the existing rate of exchange between the French franc and the CFA franc, and expressed the hope that the progress registered with respect to integration and convergence in that context would be consolidated and expanded.

They approved the plan to harmonize business law devised by the Finance Ministers of the franc zone, decided that it should be implemented immediately and called upon Ministers of Finance and Justice in all countries concerned to accord it priority.

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The Heads of State and delegation reiterated their desire to see further political progress towards the establishment of a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa.

They deplored the consequences of the civil wars in Liberia and in the Horn of Africa and urged a negotiated solution to all such fratricidal conflicts. They accordingly encouraged the States members of the Economic Community of West African States to continue their efforts to restore peace and stability in Liberia, and welcomed with interest the proposal by President Diouf before the United Nations General Assembly at its forty-seventh session to convene an international conference to bring about a peaceful settlement of the conflict in Somalia under the auspices of the United Nations and in cooperation with the Organization of African Unity, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the League of Arab States, the European Economic Community and all countries concerned. They expressed the hope that the competent United Nations bodies would consider the proposal without delay.

The Heads of State and delegation welcomed the signature, on 4 October 1992 at Rome, of a peace treaty for Mozambique. They also welcomed the fact that negotiations were under way between the Government of the Rwandese Republic and the Patriotic Rwandan Front and encouraged the two parties to reach a global agreement which would restore peace in Rwanda and ensure respect for its territorial integrity.

With regard to the Tuareg problem, they welcomed the signature of a national covenant at Bamako on 11 April 1992 and encouraged all parties to work through democratic institutions to bring peace, security and stability to the region.

With respect to Angola, they urged all the parties to honour the commitments undertaken within the framework of the Estoril accords and to continue along the path outlined therein.

The Heads of State and delegation paid tribute to the Organization of African Unity for its initiative aimed at establishing mechanisms for the prevention, handling and peaceful settlement of conflicts.

They agreed on the holding of a follow-up meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs at Libreville in June 1993. This meeting will decide the date of the XVIIIth Conference, which will be held in France in 1994.

The Heads of State and delegation welcomed the quality, sincerity and constructive spirit of the dialogue and the climate of friendship and trust in which the Conference took place.

The Heads of State and delegation expressed their sincere thanks to His Excellency Mr. El Hadj Omar Bongo, President of the Gabonese Republic, and to the Government and people of Gabon, for the warmth and quality of the welcome extended to them, as well as to their delegations, and for all the consideration shown to them during their stay at Libreville.